

## **Senate Resolution No. 29**

**Introduced by Senator Blakeslee**

Relative to the Islamic Republic of Iran

WHEREAS, The largest population of Iranians living outside the Islamic Republic of Iran live in the United States, which is home to as many as 1.5 million Iranian Americans, with the largest concentration—about 700,000—living in Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, The Iranian American community has a rich tradition of excellence in academia and the sciences and has produced luminaries in many fields, including, but not limited to, the arts, medicine, engineering, technology, and business; and

WHEREAS, Iranian Americans are active philanthropists and leaders in their local communities, providing invaluable contributions to the state's and the nation's diverse cultural fabric; and

WHEREAS, Six out of 10 Iranian Americans have immediate family living in the Islamic Republic of Iran and nearly seven out of 10 speak at least several times a month with their friends and family members who live there; and

WHEREAS, Iranian Americans have compassion and empathy for their friends and family living in the Islamic Republic of Iran who do not enjoy the same opportunities to prosper because that government infringes on the civil, cultural, economic, political, and social freedoms of its citizens, and commits serious human rights violations; and

WHEREAS, The Islamic Republic of Iran is a member state to the United Nations with a charter that obligates all its member states to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, The Islamic Republic of Iran ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which recognizes that the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world; and

WHEREAS, On March 14, 1984, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights first published a Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran, expressing its deep concern at the continuing serious

violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Islamic Republic of Iran; and

WHEREAS, On December 19, 2011, the United Nations adopted a resolution expressing its deep concern at serious ongoing human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(a) Pervasive gender inequality and violence against women, including sexual violence, a continued persecution of women's human rights defenders, arrests, violent repression, and sentencing of women exercising their right to peaceful assembly and increased discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice.

(b) Continuing discrimination and other human rights violations, at times amounting to persecution, against persons belonging to ethnic, linguistic, or other minorities, including, but not limited to, Arabs, Azeris, Baluchis, and Kurds, and their defenders.

(c) Increased persecution and human rights violations against persons belonging to recognized religious minorities, including, but not limited to, Christians, Jews, Sufis, Sunni Muslims, and Zoroastrians, and their defenders.

(d) Increased persecution and human rights violations against persons belonging to unrecognized religious minorities, particularly members of the Baha'i faith, and their defenders, including escalating attacks on Baha'is; and

WHEREAS, The Special Rapporteur appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Iran presented his latest report to the United Nations on March 12, 2012, and his report, based on over 100 eyewitness and firsthand testimonies, demonstrated "a striking pattern of violations of fundamental human rights guaranteed under international law"; and

WHEREAS, The tragic death of Nedā Āghā-Soltān became iconic of the dozens of innocent Iranians who were killed, hundreds who were injured, and the more than 4,000 Iranians who were arbitrarily arrested during the June 2009 election protests, as well as the greater struggle of Iranians to secure their human rights and political freedoms; and

WHEREAS, The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues a systematic campaign to restrict the freedom of peaceful assembly and the freedom of opinion and expression through repression, intimidation, and detainment of political opponents, human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, Internet providers, Internet users, clerics, artists, filmmakers, academics, students, and labor leaders; and

WHEREAS, The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is engaged in a comprehensive censorship effort to restrict access to the Internet, as well as mobile voice and data communications; and

WHEREAS, The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran deliberately interferes with international satellite broadcasts, including those of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Radio Farda, Voice of America's Persian News Network, and the British Broadcasting Corporation, to control the flow of information in and out of the country; and

WHEREAS, On February 17, 2012, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations specialized agency, built upon their existing regulations prohibiting the jamming of satellites and approved a change in regulations directing nations to take all necessary actions to stop deliberate interference with satellite transmission within their jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, The jamming of satellites by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a clear violation of ITU regulations, as well as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims "[E]veryone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontier"; and

WHEREAS, An expanded and sustained diplomatic effort with the Islamic Republic of Iran that elevates the importance of human rights is key to peacefully resolving the conflict with that country and providing opportunities for Iranian democracy and human rights defenders; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, during a speech delivered at American University, President John F. Kennedy argued for diplomatic solutions to foreign policy disputes by stating, "So let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved"; and

WHEREAS, President Ronald Reagan emphasized the value of diplomatic solutions to deescalating international tensions, stating in a speech delivered on January 4, 1984, that, "we're determined to deal with our differences peacefully through negotiations. We're prepared to discuss the problems that divide us and to work for practical, fair solutions on the basis of mutual compromise"; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California,* That the Senate recognizes the numerous contributions of the Iranian American

community to California's social, cultural, and economic character; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Senate urges the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ease travel restrictions on Iranian Americans seeking to visit their friends and families living in that country; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Senate stands in solidarity with Iranian Americans in calling upon the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect and ensure to all individuals within its territory—regardless of gender, ethnicity, or religion—the civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights as recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Senate strongly urges the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to effectively implement all of the human rights treaties to which it is already a party; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Senate strongly urges the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to uphold the freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and freedom of press and to end the repression, intimidation, persecution, and unlawful detainment of, among others, political opponents, human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, Internet providers, Internet users, clerics, artists, filmmakers, academics, students, and labor leaders; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Senate urges the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately cease the practice of censorship and fully comply with their legal obligations under the Radio Regulations of the International Telecommunication Union, including the cessation of harmful interference of satellite broadcasts; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Senate recognizes the month of June 2012 as 30 Days of Solidarity with the Human Rights Movement in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

Senate Resolution No. 29 read and adopted by the Senate May 31, 2012.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate